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ABSTRACT

The English language lacks a word that means long-term interpersonal influence of one person toward another. This failing likely conditions people to be superficial in their thinking, and consequently in their behavior. A new term, sigfluence, has been coined to define positive, long-term, significant, impactful, interpersonal influence. One of the fundamental motives underlying human behavior is speculated to be sigfluence. Anecdotal and research evidence supports the development of the construct sigfluence, an interdisciplinary construct which embraces statistics, psychology, sociology, education, philosophy, and theology. Development of the concept of sigfluence should be a four-stage process: (1) an analysis of the validity and reliability of the perception of sigfluence; (2) an attempt to demonstrate the reliability and validity of the construct sigfluence; (3) a demonstration that sigfluence is not a personality factor, value, or interest, but is a fundamental need which all persons possess; and (4) the development of an interpersonal model of sigfluence appropriate for clinical, business, or educational application. Future research about the concept of sigfluence will complement applications of the concept to the educational, political, and business communities. (Author/NRB)

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THE PSYCHOMETRICIZATION OF SIGFLUENCE

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ABSTRACT

We lack a word in the English language that means long-term interpersonal influence of one person toward another. This failing likely conditions us to be superficial in our thinking, consequently in our behavior. This is the reason that I have coined the term sigfluence to define positive, long-term, significant, impactful, interpersonal influence. One of the fundamental motives underlying human behavior is speculated by this author to be sigfluence. Anecdotal and research evidence supporting the development of the construct sigfluence will be presented together with an analysis of the associated statistical and psychometric problems. The concept of sigfluence is truly interdisciplinary in that the construct embraces statistics, psychology, sociology, education, philosophy, and theology. Sigfluence should be analyzed in the matter that Victor Frankl developed the concept of will-to-meaning and Freud developed will-to-pleasure; it should be considered distinct from its traditional consideration as a value or a personality factor. Applications of the concept of sigfluence to the educational, political, and business communities will be complemented by recommended future academic avenues for inquiry.

Think of the person, in addition to your parents, who exercised the most significant long-term impact upon your life. Reflect for a few moments upon the effect of this special person. If you believe that the effect was genuine and that your assessment of the significant long-term influence was reliable and valid, then let us explore one of the most potentially powerful and presently neglected aspects of our being - the nature of sigfluence.

The focal point of this article is the hypothesized existence in man of a fundamental will-to-long-term, significant, positive, impactful, interpersonal influence - sigfluence. Note that the English language at present lacks a word that defines the preceding concept. This failing likely conditions us to be superficial in our thinking and consequently in our actions.

Recent research supports the relation between language and thought. A study was completed by MacKay (1980) in which students sympathetic to women's liberation read otherwise identical paragraphs containing either the plural "They" or prescriptive "He". Female subjects had lower comprehension and personal relevance scores for the prescriptive "He" than for the plural paragraph whereas the opposite was true of the male subjects. More females than males judged the prescriptive "He" paragraph to have a male author. An identical experiment attempting to replicate the initial experiment, using students with less favorable attitudes toward women's liberation replicated only the judgments concerning the sex of the author. These findings would suggest that a single word, the prescriptive "He," influences attitudes and thought, but that its effect depends upon the pre-existing social attitudes of the reader.

In the Oxford Universal Dictionary, Onions (1955), none of the words that are synonymous with sigfluence approach its meaning.

The closest definition of power is ability to do something or anything, or to act upon a person or thing.

The closest definition of influence is the capacity of producing effects by insensible or invisible means. An effect may be the choice of one's tie or the shifting of one's values in life; no distinction is made. The salient but inadequate definition of impact is the act of impinging; the striking of one body against another; collision. This meaning would be appropriate for car crashes, but hardly for sigfluential interventions.

The first meaning of effect -- something caused or, produced -- pales in describing the concept of sigfluence.

A modern view of language was advanced by Steinberg (1982) in which language was depicted as neutral with respect to the thoughts it conveys. Research that supports the language independence assumption includes a study by Rosch (1973) in which the conceptual coding of colors and forms was found to be similar for speakers of English and Dani, languages that code shapes and colors quite differently. The conflicting results between MacKay's study and Rosch's may be explained by the type of thought examined. According to MacKay (1980), language is more likely to influence evaluative thought, subjective or personal judgments concerning the value of objects and events for which perceptually based data are of the question.

It appears likely that the absence of the word sigfluence from our language means that our evaluation of an interpersonal influence into the conceptual category of "sigfluence" relies upon five independent cognitive associations. To label certain social interactions as potentially sigfluential, we would have to independently associate five memory compartments (1) significant (2) long-term (3) impactful (4) interpersonal (5) influence.

Analyses of perception within the psychological domain have largely dealt with studies of auditory and visual perception. It would be interesting to study the perceptual network and corresponding linguistic categories that order our perception of potentially sigfluential events and people. Our addition of the single word sigfluence to our vocabulary may alter our perception of the effect of people and events on our lives. We would have a single chunk to unite five independent concepts. Master and grandmaster status in chess is more dependent upon the larger number of chunks of quality continuations than better visual memory according to Gleitman (1983). Their superiority was in the conceptual organization of the game -- better chunks.

Social Influence Literature

Nearly all social science literature can be categorized into influence literature since the quantification of the effect of a treatment or personal interaction upon an independent variable is quantified and compared with results expected by change.

Articles, noting tactics used to influence superiors, co-workers, and subordinates appeared recently by Kipnis and Schmidt (1980) and Rim and Erez (1980). Influence was defined in terms of getting "one's way". This short-term notion of influence pervades social science literature. The authors observed that despite many years of research on the topic of social influence, we know very little about how people use power. Even less is known about the long-term effects of people on people.

The counseling process involves one person attempting to influence another. Despite over 50 studies examining aspects of the interpersonal influence in counseling, it is still unclear how, and to what extend, a counselor can influence a client. The effects of the influence process are

unknown according to Heppner and Hardley (1981). As stated by Eysenck (1966) psychotherapists often do little good when compared to non-therapeutic controls. Still worse, a sizeable minority of clients are harmed by therapists according to Ellis (1982). Although Ellis claimed that a sizeable minority of clients are harmed by psychotherapy (negative sigfluence) there are no cited studies that support this conjecture.

We must attempt to develop a construct of sigfluence for the counseling profession.

Appel, Berry and Hoffman (1973) studied the factors that college seniors perceived as having the lasting impact on their lives. The seniors cited peers, professors and high school teachers as most impactful. The authors did not distinguish between influence and perception of significant long-term influence. Also, since the students' careers have not yet begun, it appeared that the validity and reliability of the perceptions of influence may be questioned.

An analysis by Kaira (1974) in which high and low achiever, in an Indian organization showed that the influence of some non-family members such as teachers, relatives, etc. (not in the immediate family environment) seemed to play a significant role in the development of achievement values during childhood, which led to high occupational achievement. The author speculated that in traditional Indian society the teacher (Guru) was given a very high status, next only to mother (Mata) and father (Pita). This may be a reason for the teacher's important role in developing achievement values.

The impact of gender on social influence has been incompletely understood by social scientists. It appears that men are thought to be more influential and women more easily influenced, according to Eagly (1983). In natural settings this difference holds, but these differences are said to

stem largely from formal status inequalities in which men are more likely to have high status roles. Much of the impact that we have on other people's behavior stems from their compliance with our expectations about how they should behave - normative social influence. Naturally, the notion of influence used in the research literature describes immediate effect, not long-term sigfluence.

Latane (1981) proposed a theory of social impact specifying the effect of other persons on an individual. according to the theory, when other people are the source of impact and the individual is the target, impact should be a multiplicative function of the strength, immediacy, and number of other people. Furthermore, impact should take the form of a power function with the marginal effect of the (N^{th}) -- other person being less than that of the ($N-1^{st}$). The author cited research with conformity, imitation, tipping behavior, and the effects of crowding in rats. Although the theme, social impact, appeared close to the concept of sigfluence, the experimental research cited was of the conventional experimental paradigm. I am not sure that sigfluential events fit into the paradigm of the multiplicative function since truly sigfluential events are rare and difficult, if not impossible, to define in terms of strength, immediacy and number of other people. A non-canonical approach must be developed.

In forming impressions of others these conceptions are not a simple aggregate of the attributes we perceive them to have. Instead they form an organized whole, whose elements are interpreted in relation to the overall pattern according to Asch (1952).

Attribution theory is a recent social approach that studies how observers decide to which of several possible causes the behavior of another person should be attributed. Laboratory studies showed that people consider

situational factors when trying to infer dispositional qualities (such as motives) of another person. Usually however situational factors are underemphasized in interpreting why another person does what he does reported Jones and Harvis (1967). Our social perception is nowhere as accurate as our visual perception according to Gleitman (1983). The manner in which we perceive the motivations of those whose acts are potentially sigfluential is fertile ground for psychological research in the 80's.

School's Influence

An encyclopedic account of the impact that college had on students was completed by Feldman and Newcomb (1969). They concluded that freshman to senior changes were characterized by declining "authoritarianism", dogmatism, and prejudice together with decreasingly conservative attitudes toward public issues and growing sensitivity to aesthetic experiences. Naturally it is hard to separate collegiate effect from myriad other influences including maturation. In surveying the research literature on school's effectiveness the research has not been particularly successful in identifying factors connected with the differential performance of schools according to Cuttance (1980). Furthermore, findings have failed to confirm hypotheses concerning the effectiveness of factors which have popularly been associated with effective schools. In an exhaustive study of American education Jencks (1972) concluded that schools serve primarily as selection and certification agencies, whose job it is to measure and label people, not to change them. Schools therefore legitimize inequality. It is not quixotic to speculate, given faith in Jenck's findings, that burnout in American education may be largely attributable to unsatisfied sigfluence needs.

On the microcosmic side of the influence of education issue, 60% of adults surveyed cited elementary school teachers as an important or very important element in the way they developed according to Mottl (1982). Also collegiate faculty who were liberally involved with students outside of the classroom were perceived influential by their students in a study by Gaff (1973).

How do we reconcile Jenck's findings of little educational influence with the latter studies? Two hypotheses may be advanced: (1) we don't have a satisfactory statistical vehicle to quantify sigfluence at present so that attempts become highly subjective and arbitrary.

(2) In Jenck's study an attempt was made to globally quantify the sigfluence of schools; in the latter studies the analyses were limited to surveying perceptions of sigfluence. In short, we must distinguish among (a) sigfluence (b) perception of sigfluence and (c) sigfluence needs.

Anecdotal Evidence for Sigfluence Needs and Perception of Sigfluence

Dr. Albert Sabin, the medical pioneer who developed the oral vaccine that virtually eradicated polio in the United States, was recently 77 and, in the cruelest of ironies, confined to a hospital bed as a victim of a nerve disease. A columnist for the Daily News, Bob Greene (1983) asked readers to remember Dr. Sabin for his "sigfluence". More than 45,000 readers sent him cards touching to both Dr. Sabin and his wife who reads them to her husband day and night.

Dr. Sabin stated, "It makes me feel (as a result of the outpouring of sentiment) that I did something worthwhile. You always have a feeling of doubting whether you have done with your life is worthwhile. But from these letters, the evidence is very good that people consider my work worthwhile."

Dr. Sabin, epitome of a practitioner of sigfluence, doubted the worth of his social contribution. We give celebrity status to rock stars and athletes but without Bob Greene's column, Dr. Sabin likely never would have had public confirmation of his enormous social contribution.

Dr. Sabin closed with, "It will mean so much to me if you can tell your readers that they have reached me, and they have made me feel wonderful," a touching sentiment by a man who should be used as a model for sigfluence.

In a recent interview Buffalo Bob Smith (1984), emcee for Captain Kangaroo for two decades, was asked if he made a long-term social contribution. He answered, "I taught kids not to fight." It was not enough for Buffalo Bob to simply entertain; he wanted to sigfluence.[1]

Alberto Salazar (1984), champion marathon runner, confided that the motivation behind his rigorous training was the fact that he wanted ultimately to influence kids away from alcohol and drugs. He quoted, "People with cause are hard to beat."[2]

In a recent recommendation letter written for a college bound senior, tears came to my eyes because I recognize the role that my Leadership Workshop had in Hae Kyun's metamorphosis from a shy reserved young lady in senior class president and the likely sigfluence. "It was one of the most rewarding experiences of my teaching career," stated Loase (1984).[3]

In a recent conversation between Loase (1984) and a plastic surgeon the doctor quoted, "I'm a whore 80% of the time, but if an accident occurs (i.e., a person going through a windshield) this is significant. Then I shine. The highlight of my life was re-attaching a child's severed arm a few years ago. I was high; it was eight hours of intensity." He was responding to sigfluence. He had made a long-term personal contribution to another's life.

Otherwise he was selling out to money and (in his mind) superficial wasteful surgery.[4]

A colleague, Sy Levine (1984), recently discussed the exhilaration attached to his saving a person's life three years ago. "My child," he stated, "is shared with a lot of people in terms of development. This was different. I exclusively gave life to another. I'm still excited."[5]

Marjorie, a college student in her 50's, stated that her second grade teacher was her most sigfluencial figure. She was influenced by the teacher's warmth and empathy and wanted to become a teacher. In high school Marjorie was discouraged from becoming a teacher by an extremely negative experience with her history teacher. She entered office work after high school and, after thirty-two years, was convinced by a friend to start college.[6] Influence can be negative. Marjorie influenced several colleagues to return to college, multipling the influence of her friend.

An obituary of a highly respected teacher concluded with these words: "Had he left no survivors?" One of the mourners said "I am the editor of a newspaper in a southern state. I was the editor of a junior high school newspaper of which he was advisor. He still lives on in me and the paper I published." "He had left no survivors?" commented Robinson and Brower (1982).

A colleague, Dennis Meehan, related the story of a Roman Catholic priest at Manhattan College who was lecturing on social problems. One of his students asked why he was not actively involved in changing the problems of the poor. The priest resigned from his professorial post and developed a network of homes for troubled youth, directly assisting thousands of youngsters nationwide.[7] An assertive college student made the difference in thousands of lives - positive sigfluence.

Former President Jimmy Carter was asked if he did his best at the Naval Academy. After Carter admitted that he did not always do his best, Admiral Rickover asked, "Why not?" According to Carter this was a question he was never able to forget and became a rule for him to live by wrote Knapp, Stohl, and Reardon (1981).

A journalist for NBC News, Jon Alpert, interviewed a farmer in Mexico who had lost everything.[8] The land was fallow, no food, no plumbing in the house, and no hope for the future. The man's wife was crying on camera. Jon Alpert found the man a job in a local bakery and the story appeared to have a happy ending. Several days later, the journalist came back for a follow-up interview. The previous employee of the bakery had come back, threatened the farmer, and regained his old job. Jon Alpert had tried to sigfluence; follow-up studies show how difficulty it is to wield long-term influence.

Affect

Many in America are enslaved by affect as opposed to effect. When a high school senior was recently interviewed by NBC News and queried as to the personal effect of premature school closing, she lamented "There goes my prom down the drain."[9] She was seemingly oblivious to the long-term consequences of a school closing on her career and education.

According to Jacobson (1977), psychoanalysis has no far failed to develop a consistent "affect theory". Surveying the literature on affects, one is immediately struck by technological confusion.

Siompoulos (1983) observed that both "emotions" and "affects" might include the whole complex of psychological and physiological manifestations and include the affective motor phenomena and behavior patterns together with

the neurological and endocrinological aspects. Sometimes the word "emotion" means a phenomenon, sometimes the dynamics underlying the phenomenon.

The affective nature of a person (according to Piaget) is a dynamic process of continued adaptation of current interpersonal situations to earlier ones. The difficulty of precisely defining affects was highlighted by Piaget's recent view in which the intellectual and affective were essentially inseparable. Wolman (1977) synthesized current theory regarding the relationship between affect and cognition. Piaget speculated that neither process causes the other. Cognition is a matter of mental structures while affect energizes our behavior. Affect can influence the rate of intellectual development or what one may select for attention but will not determine what one's perceptions are nor one's conception of a problem. Cognition is linked to emotion via perception, learning, and memory, but cognition cannot energize behavior.

Recent years have been characterized by a major change in the way that psychologists view emotion according to Lazarus (1980). In theories of adult emotional response, cognitive appraisal now functions as a central construct which mediates the relationship between the person and the environment. Zajonc argued that affect and cognition can occur without extensive perceptual and cognitive encoding but that affect and cognition are controlled by separate and partially independent neural systems. Lazarus responded that Zajonc's mistake was his approach to cognition. This framework characteristic of the present day hypothesis testing school of cognitive psychology stemed from the conception of mind as an analogue to the computer. According to Lazarus, this neglects the nature of humans as meaning-oriented, meaning-creating creatures, who constantly evaluate events from the perspective of their well being and react emotionally to some of

these evaluations. Lazarus closed with an appeal to formulate rules about how cognitive processes generate, influence, and shape the emotional response in every individual of the human species.

What will be the next wave along the cross currents of theories of emotions? There are signs according to Averil (1983) that the recent cognitive wave is on the wane and may be replaced by a social constructivist view of emotion. Such a view hypothesizes emotions as social constructions, not biological givens or the products of strictly intrapsychic processes.

If Averill was correct then perhaps a social constructivist orientation may be in harmony with research attempting to explain the perceptions and validity of the construct of sigfluence. Perhaps a social constructivist approach may explain why we as a culture give such a disproportionate share of remuneration, time, status and esteem to those whose sole motivation is affect as opposed to sigfluence.

Perception of Sigfluence Questionnaire

This author computer analyzed the results of a questionnaire given to a class of undergraduates. The same questionnaire was administered two months later in an attempt to ascertain reliability measures.

The students were asked:

1. Who, outside of family, exerted the most significant long-term effect on your life?
2. Describe your age then add the occupation of the influencer. Did you tell the influencer of his effect? When did you know you were influenced?
3. Rank from 1-10 the most desirable jobs. The jobs rated included:
   a) high school teacher
   f) college teacher

b) doctor
c) lawyer
d. secretary
e. politician
g) mechanic
h) professional athlete
i) actor
j) elementary school teacher

4. Rank from 1-10 the jobs having the most long-term influence on your life.
5. Rate yourself on a continuum from 0-10 as to your perceived influence of non-familial people in your life.
6. How would you describe your early upbringing?
   a. permissive - little direction or structure
   b. strict
   c. other

Results

For a sample n = 19, 85% cited the same person as the most significant influence after a two month interval. Median age today was 21. Median age of the sigfluence was 17. Only 47% of the sample told the influencer of the perceived influence. The jobs of the most significant influencer included friends (3), teacher (1), consultant (2), priest (1), boss (2), secretary (1), religion (1), counselor (1), senior citizen (1), and coach (1). The correlation coefficients between the perception of desirability and perception of sigfluence in the person's life were very high, .952 and .867. The reliability of the rankings of desirability and sigfluence of the jobs were high, .732 and .691. The hypothesis that youngsters raised in permissive familial settings will perceive significantly more non-familial influence in their lives was upheld at = .10 level of significance.

In looking at the results several salient insights emerged:

1. Many non-conventional influence people were cited including a senior citizen, secretary, and a lot of friends.
2. Fewer than half of the respondents told the influencer of the influencer's long-term effect.
3. People reliably report their rankings of significant influences.
4. There appears to be an optimum age for influence, fourteen to seventeen.
5. There appears to be a relationship between familial dynamics and perception of influence of significant others, i.e. people raised in permissive familial settings tend to report higher levels of influence of others in their lives.

If we are correct in assuming that man has an inherent need for long-term influence, the need is apparently rarely satisfied. Few of those interviewed tell the most dramatic influencers of their perception of their sigfluence. The relationship between a job's desirability and the perception of that job's influence on a person's life are dramatically high suggesting a need for sigfluence as a significant attribute of job desirability. The perception of sigfluence appears to be a highly reliable construct since 85% of the sample cited the same person as their most significant long-term influence after a two month interval.

Modern Mathematics

The oxymoron-like quest, (some may delete the oxy), to formalize an intuitive notion, sigfluence, may look to mathematics for example. Mathematics has for centuries formalized or invalidated notions that were originally hunches or guesses. Since ancient times Euclidean geometry was

thought to convey a prior analytic truths that reflect physical reality. In 1829, however, Lobachevsky published an article which directly conflicted with the parallel postulate and a perfectly valid, non-intuitive, non-Euclidean geometry was born recalled Newman (1956). Great thinkers like Bertrand Russel and Alfred Lord Whitehead attempted to firm the foundations of mathematics through a rigorous axiomatic development of th real numbers. Kurt Godel showed that the axiomatic method which mathematicians had been exploiting with increasing power and rigor since the days of Euclid, possesses certain inherent limitations when it is applied even to relatively simple systems such as the familiar arithmetic of the cardinal numbers. With this in mind we are aware of the inherent foundational problems within the mathematical domain, the domain that will ultimately affirm or deny the reliability and validity of sigfluence.

Development of Sigfluence

What is sigfluence? It is a perception of long-term interpersonal influence, this influence itself, an innate need, a value, a personality factor, an interest, or simply an illusion?

In examining the Handbook of the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire, none of the sixteen personality factor "constructs" approached the newly-defined construct -- sigfluence. Factor G+ is defined by Cattell, Eber, and Tatsuoka (1980) to describe individuals who view themselves as guardians of manners and morals, conscientious, guided by a sense of duty, and interested in analyzing people. The construct does not equate with the notion of sigfluence in that no mention is made of influencing others, much less sigfluencing others.

Let us consider the "altruist" value in the Super Work Value Inventory. This value related to "work which enables one to contribute to the welfare of others." The "altruism" score is based upon a subject's summed ratings (from unimportant to very important) of statements such as... help others. The results of reliability and validity studies attached in the appendix give evidence of the soundness of the construct "altruism". However, no notion of long-term influence characterizes the statements from which the altruism score emerges; sigfluence appears distinct from each of the constructed values.

Let us examine the Strong-Cambell Interest Inventory, a highly respected psychometric instrument. In scrutinizing the descriptions of the "pure" or extreme types for the six General Occupational Themes, the social theme appears most germane to the concept of sigfluence. The pure S-type is described as social, responsible, humanistic, and concerned for the welfare of others. Sigfluence appears to be distinct from the construct of "social interest".

If sigfluence does not fit into the present categories of personality factor, interest, or value then again, what is sigfluence?

My hypothesis is that there are three notions attached to sigfluence that have to be dealt with separately. First there is the <u>perception</u> of sigfluence which I have briefly discussed in the questionnaire. There is secondly the defined concept of sigfluence which refers to the impactful interpersonal influence; finally there is my hypothesized existence in man of an innate need for sigfluence. The sigfluence need differs radically from Freud's pleasure principle. For Freud the function of the id is the fulfillment of the primordial or initial principle of life. The aim of the pleasure principle is to rid the person of tension or if this is impossible to reduce

the amount of tension to a low level. The aim of the pleasure principle may be said to consist of avoiding pain and finding pleasure reported Hall (1954). I speculate that the sigfluence need is fundamental to man, is manifested in the "Golden Rule", the desire to have meaningful, reciprocal interpersonal relations, the commitment of parents to children, the need to be respected for one's achievements, the need for a lasting social contribution, and the desire for immortality.

The need for sigfluence may also be evidenced by the fundamental dissatisfaction of those who devote themselves to hedonism, amassment of riches, crime, or cruelty. It also gives a strong rationale for the pervasive burnout and malaise that we all encounter -- unsatisfied sigfluence needs.

The underlying assumption of Rogerian client-centered counseling is that man is rational, constructive and forward moving. Client-centered therapy is a process where reorganization of the self takes place so the client can more accurately symbolize his feelings, reduce vulnerability to threat, and attain a more positive self-regard. Rogers stated, "If I have made a contribution it is around the central theme that the potential of the individual can be released providing the proper psychological climate." This was reported by Hall (1967). While Roger's orientation is constant with the spirit of sigfluence, I would like to make more explicit the notion of Rogerian potential in terms of perception of a positive, long-term, impactful, interpersonal influence - a lasting social contribution.

The existential philosophers, such as Kierkegaard and Heidegger have taken the position that man by virtue of his existence is intrinsically good or worthwhile regardless of his achievements and the external evaluations ascribed to him by others. This view has become an integral part of the contemporary humanistic psychologies of Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and Rollo

May. The assumption that man is good, rational, and forward looking opposes the early Freudian view that depicts man as hedonistic, selfish, and dominated by tensions emerging from conflicts between the id, ego and super ego according to Cunningham and Peters (1973). The notion of sigfluence opposes the early Freudian view, is constant with the theoretical foundation of Maslow, Rogers, and May but specifies the content of the "forward looking".

In rational-emotive counseling the counselor forcefully confronts the client with those irrational beliefs which are at the heart of his disturbance and teaches him more rational ways of thinking and behaving. Ellis, its founder, dismisses questions pertaining to man's essential nature as irrelevant. According to Ellis, "Beliefs in personal worth or worthlessness have no empirical base and cannot be scientifically verified." This was noted by Cunningham and Peters (1973). The notion of sigfluence needs does not contradict Ellis' emphasis on confronting irrational beliefs. It does detail a specific direction for the client's attention after the patient achieves "cognitive control".

Victor Frankl (1963) developed a theoretic formulation called logotherapy in which he hypothesized that the striving to find meaning in one's life is the primary motivational force in man. The notion of sigfluence is constant with Frankl's position; it simply objectifies the notion of meaning.

Hamachek (1971) describes Maslow's unique contribution to the humanistic social psychological viewpoint -- an outgrowth of Maslow's preoccupation with healthy people rather than sick ones. Maslow has developed a theory of motivation which assumed that needs are satisfied along a hierarchy of priority and prepotency. The physiological needs are the most potent and the

self-actualization needs are satisfied last, after physiological, safety, etc. In studying healthy, self-actualizing individuals, Maslow described fifteen features which distinguish self-actualizing people. Three features are related to the concept of sigfluence:

1. Ability to devote attention to a task, duty, or mission, that seems particularly cut out for them.
2. A highly developed sense of ethics.
3. Concern with the welfare of the world as a whole.

None of these features has the character of a perception of sigfluence needs, or desire for a long-term social contribution.

Cunningham and Peters (1973) summarized 42 different theoretical approaches to individual counseling. Not a single approach was based upon the central notion that man has a fundamental need for what he perceives as lasting, positive, impactful, interpersonal influence.

In developing the new construct "sigfluence," we must remember that a construct refers to something that is not observable but is literally constructed by the investigator to account for the regularities that he observes in behavior.[10]

A four stage process is recommended in developing the concept of sigfluence. We have to first start with an analysis of the validity and reliability of the <u>perception</u> of sigfluence. We must ask people to name those persons who exercised the most sigfluence on their lives. We must interview the same people in different ways in order to establish convergent validity. The different modes may consist of casual interviews, essays, or survey responses. Also responses must be compared with responses after a reasonable time interval (reliability). Thus we may confirm convergent validity and reliability for the <u>perception</u> of sigfluence. In order to

ascertain evidence of divergent validity for the perception of sigfluence individuals might be asked to rate along a continuum of sigfluence the perceived sigfluence of significant others. This measure may be compared with perceptions of characteristics such as materialism of the significant others. The correlation coefficient between the perceptions of sigfluence and perceptions of materialism should be negative or near zero in order to demonstrate divergent validity for the construct perception of sigfluence.

Our next step would be to attempt to demonstrate the reliability and validity of the construct sigfluence. One should interview those individuals who were the agents of sigfluence and compare their judgments of their influence with the judgments of the recipients of the influence.

A high positive correlation between the perceptions would add support to the validity of sigfluence. In addition, disinterested researchers would have to study the changes attributed to the influences, autobiographical accounts of the influence, and the longitudinal effect of the influence in an attempt to establish convergent validity. The influencer may be asked after a reasonable time frame to re-evaluate his perception of his influence in an attempt to establish reliability.

An attempt to establish validity for sigfluence may examine the perceptions of influence of individuals perceived as neutral or negative influencers. If the perceptions of influence of people viewed as neutral influences did differ in the expected direction from the perceptions of the significant influencers, this would add to the divergent validity of the concept of sigfluence.

If we are able to show that sigfluence is a reliable and valid construct, our third recommended research step is to show that sigfluence is not a personality factor, not a value, not an interest, but a fundamental need

that we all possess (some may be more aware of their need-to-sigfluence). The relationship between one's sigfluence needs and one's perception of sigfluence needs would have to be explored. Perhaps we could compare one's behavior in an experimental setting with one's self-report on a sigfluence-need survey. This procedure may be used to quantify the validity of the perceptions of sigfluence needs or the validity of the sigfluence need survey but it would miss the mark...the hypothesized fundamental aspect of sigfluence needs.

Evidence for the universality of sigfluence needs may include pre and post surveys of clients who enter therapy or a sigfluence seminar. If the clients reported increased perception of sigfluence needs, increased satisfaction of such needs and improved feeling's of self-worth as a result of therapy or an educative intervention, this would lend credence to a hypothesis that man is self-actualized in relation to his being aware of and satisfying his innate will-to-sigfluence.

The final step of the four stage research project would be to develop an interpersonal model of sigfluence - a model appropriate for clinical, business, or educative application.

We also have to consider the reciprocal nature of sigfluence. There are moments of our lives that we may need sigfluence, other moments that we need to sigfluence others.

The quantification of sigfluence may take the place of a product of probabilities in which we take into account an individual's receptivity to sigfluence and an appropriate significant other, available to provide the impactful interpersonal influence. Perhaps our ability to provide sigfluence to others and to ourselves is based upon the appearance and intervention of a significant other during a critical period.

The philosophy of sigfluence is antithetical to the deterministic outlook of Freud in which the die is cast early in terms of one's personal development. Sigfluence may be viewed as the other side of the coin of power. Instead of making people subservient to one's will through power, one who sigfluences empowers people to become independent, strong shapers of their own destinies through being in touch with their ability and need to self-actualize.

We may need special statistics and probability distributions useful to the concept of sigfluence. This should not be viewed as a heretical stance since the "normal" distribution that pervades the social and physical sciences was an outgrowth of a gambling manual in which the sum of a very large number of binomial terms could be efficiently approximated by the bell-shaped curve. Note the term "normal" describes distributions based upon outcomes of dice according to Cowles and Davis (1983). What adjective would we give to distributions based upon the frequency of sigfluential events? The term "normal" <u>should</u> be used to describe the frequency of sigfluential interactions; language is likely not passive in its relation to thought.

In developing a theory of sigfluence we must scrutinize the accuracy of one's self-perceptions. It has been stated that people's self-descriptions have very little to do with the actual nature of themselves. An employee's attitude toward his work showed little or no correlation with supervisory ratings according to Bernberg (1952). It may be argued that if people cannot validly rate themselves at work, how can they rate the sigfluence of significant others. I would strongly disagree!! Ratings in the world of work are based upon the questionable assumption that we can reliably and validly quantify job competency. There is evidence, according to Loase (1983), that our present evaluation of essential pre-requisites for hiring lacks validity.

Why would evaluation on the job be more valid than our present means of screening people prior to employment?

The world of work is a particularly unsuitable arena in which to test the consistency, reliability, and validity of self-perception.

Reliability is a sine qua non for the legitimacy of sigfluence. THe 85% reliability figure that this investigator computed after a two month interval would tend to confirm the reliability of the perception of sigfluence.

In an analysis of the current state of affairs in parapsychological research Loase (1976) noted that dramatic results in experiments in telepathy and psychokinesis usually yielded non-replicatable, unreliable results. This lack of replication did not stop the American Academy for the Advancement of Science from designing parapsychology as an appropriate direction for scientific inquiry. In two years of ESP research this author found nothing approaching a replicatable result. Let us shift our focus from the psychic to the intrapsychic; let us attempt to capture, quantity, and understand this elusive dimension of our experience, the nature of sigfluence.

If we understand our minds and the things that are striving to utter themselves through our minds, we move others, not because we have understood or thought about those others, but because all life has that same root.

William Butler Yeats

Applications to Education

If Jenck's conclusion is correct, (namely that schools function primarily as education and certification agencies with little or no power to influence or change people), we are immoral in continuing the illusions that we convey in directing social service oriented people to function as teachers. We possibly direct the highly idealistic (high "altruist" value

scores) into an arena with potentially little chance for sigfluence. Perhaps, though, we can make global impactful change if we demand responsible behavior of our students and show continuous concern according to Loase (1982). Eighty per cent of retained inner city junior high school students passed all their subjects as a result of a special program. Ninety-five per cent of those successful students dropped out at the high school level because the concern was not continuous. If we were to show that the schools can, as a result of continuous concern, impact and sigfluence students in the disadvantaged sector, we will have to adjust to a radical re-ordering of economic advantage in our society. At present it appears that the schools perpetuate privilege and poverty in our society and will do so until we develop a notion and a commitment toward sigfluence.

Pedersen (1979), made a case for the life long influence of a first grade teacher. Of three first grade teachers, teacher A was said to significantly enhance I.Q. score achievement. Teacher A was also thought to dramatically affect adult status; two thirds of Teacher A's former pupils were in the upper third of adult status. Not a single one was in the lowest third. This was significantly better than either Teacher B or Teacher C in this longitudinal analysis.

Teacher A was said to never blame a child's failure on heredity, poor kindergarten preparations, or laziness. She felt that the student had not been properly motivated, and she promptly endeavored to instill a sense of self-confidence that the student retained throughout his school years.

Pedersen's article is not without its faults. There are no valid statistical measures for longitudinal analysis of students from Teacher A, B, and C. However, an in-depth analysis of the effects of such an acknowledged master is an immensely profitable avenue for an analysis of sigfluence.

In order to appease outraged citizens who regularly launch diatribes against the perceived lack of effectiveness of the public schools, state education commissions have created Competency Testing. These exams are based upon an arbitrary set of skills that bear little relation to those imperfectly understood skills needed in the real working world according to Loase (1983). Before such state-imposed exams should be used, a sigfluence study, analyzing the speculative social impact of these tests, should be formulated. At present, we rely upon face validity for establishing the validity of these instruments; that is a director's colleagues or friends state that the exam looks OK. We rarely look at the long-term social effects of our actions.

Applications to the World of Work

Freud presumed that the two major aspects of our being were love and work. Let us explore the arena of work. Most professional jobs are doled out on the basis of credentials. In an analysis of the validity of the professional credentials of computer scientists, Loase (1983) found that although mathematics served as a major factor in the screening of applicants for computer science entry, there was a considerable disproportion between mathematical coursework and frequency of such topics on the job. Also a statistically significant negative correlation existed between job competencies used and formal coursework for the general practitioner, an embarrassing anomaly for the community of computer scientists.

The Supreme Court of the United States in 1971 ruled in Griggs vs. Duke Power Company that a high school diploma or a general intelligence test could not be used by an employer as a screening device for entry level employment or promotion unless such instruments could be shown to bear a demonstrable

relationship to successful performance on the jobs for which they were used. The evidence showed on the contrary that employees who had not completed high school or taken and passed the tests had continued to perform satisfactorily and make progress in the department for which the high school and test criteria are not used. The Supreme Court affirmed that what is required by Congress is the removal of artificial, arbitrary, and unnecessary barriers to employment when the barriers operate insidiously to discriminate on the basis of racial or other impermissible classification. The company's lack of discriminatory intent was suggested by special efforts to help the undereducated employees through company financing of two-thirds of the cost of tuition for high school training. However, the Supreme Court ruled against the practices, not the motivation, of the unnecessary barriers to employment. "The Act proscribes not only overt discrimination but also practices that are fair in form but discriminatory in operation." The court ruled against covert bias. Even though the high school diploma and general intelligence test appeared fair, as the Supreme Court indicated, the criteria represented the institutionalization of covert bias.[11]

In the New York Times article, "Cells and Courts Aren't the Only Answers," Gerald Lynch, President of John Jay College of Criminal Justice, quoted from "Crime and Public Policy": "Parents of stealers (do not interpret stealing...as 'deviant'); they do not punish, and they do not care." Gerald Lynch goes on to say that the answers to our social problems are not just changes in the legal system. <u>The answers are true equality of education, job opportunities, quality of family life, and family mental health</u>. "We must send signals on public policy. What makes the difference is changes in the social fabric of our society, not just changes in the system."[12]

We are never made explicitly aware of the responsibility and sigfluence that we all exercise in perpetuating the status quo in our present categorization of people for the world of work.

Application to Politics

There persists a general feeling that social science research is non-utilized in policy making despite its expansion, noted Atal (1976). In a recent Congressional session, House leaders informed Congressman that they could vote for a multi-billion dollar job proposal with impunity because it would either die in the Senate or be vetoed. One could point with pride to his desire to demonstrate sigfluence knowing that it was meaningless and politically safe.

In his book--Power: A New Social Analysis, Bertrand Russel observed that the "fundamental concept in social science is Power in the same sense in which Energy is the fundamental concept in physics." One cannot fully understand the fundamental nature of power as a key element in social interaction without at the same time seeking to understand the concept of empathy as a counter force to power according to Clark (1980). A useful corollary to Clark's revelation might be: The fundamental concept in social science should be sigfluence.

In a recent article Hatch (1982) commented that psychology received a disproportionately small proportion of the federal monies allocated to scientific research, 1.69%. Senator Hatch supported an addition of $5 million to the level of social and behavioral science research in fiscal 1983. Such priorities are encouraging. However, a refinement of Congressional procedure might contribute to increased fairness in our society. Such a refinement might parallel mandated environmental impact studies preceding certain

building construction, and should include mandated sigfluence studies speculating the long-term social consequences of legislation.

A recent conversation with an aide to my local Congressman confirmed my ideas. She confided, "When you see the extraordinary disproportion between the rhetoric and the final legislation and couple that with the seldom understood long-term impact of the legislation, the time is right for a notion of sigfluence in Congress."[13]

This idea would not be well received by the mythical Trilateral Commission, which was founded in 1973 at David Rockefeller's initiative to avoid crisis. The crisis might be summarized as follows: "During the 1960s segments of the normally quiescent masses of the population became politically mobilized and began pressing their demands, thus creating a crisis, because these demands cannot be met, at least without a significant redistribution of wealth and power, which is not to be contemplated." This was reported by Stern (1982).

What the commission recommended was "moderation in democracy." The commission was suspicious of so-called value-oriented intellectuals. They would be deeply suspicious of the notion of sigfluence.

"Drop in alcohol-related accidents," (1983) showed that alcohol-related accidents and deaths involving 18 year olds have dropped more than 20% since the state adopted the 19 year old drinking age. We must be bludgeoned into the reality that political decisions are sigfluential, life-or-death decisions.

At a recent conference of Physicians for Social Responsibility the six key speakers agreed that our muted awareness of the growing peril of nuclear war has led to a "mass psych-numbing" and other social ailments. We have to show that pretending isn't working, said John E. Mack, Professor of

Psychiatry at Harvard. "The people can make a difference" recorded Stern (1982). Nuclear peril represents the nadir of potentially negative influence.

Research Suggestions for the 80s

1. Demonstrate that perception of sigfluence, sigfluence, and sigfluence needs are valid and reliable constructs.
2. Let psychometrics, sociology, statistics, psychology, education, theology, and philosophy forge a link between academe and the real world applications of sigfluence.
3. Analyze autobiographical accounts of people reflecting upon sigfluential persons in their lives.
4. Study the effect that language has on the way we evaluate personal interactions, particularly potentially sigfluential interactions.
5. Examine the relationship between intelligence (a construct fraught with problems) and sigfluence.
6. Explore the relationship between sigfluence, perception of sigfluence and familial dynamics.
7. Develop new statistical tools and probability distributions appropriate to the study of sigfluence.
8. Attempt to relate the study of sigfluence to the century old question of neatly dichotomizing cognition and emotion.
9. Scrutinize the relationship between learning and perception of sigfluence and sigfluence needs.

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